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ABSTRACT

Future consequences of current policies related to education are discussed. The paper considers the major political effects of cybernetic and associated communications technology. These include: (1) the centralization of power in public and private spheres, (2) the shift in governmental authority from the local and state level to the federal government, and (3) the gradual elimination of free choice of housing and education for lower income people. The introduction of data acquisition and management systems, which will give us a system-management capability of substantial complexity and power, will transform America in the two social policy areas of housing and education. Technology fosters a gradual centralization of power in both the private and public spheres, and it causes a substantial change in national policies and the national politics which support them. Ideological politics is now apparent in education in the three significant areas of racial integration, sex education curriculum, and the teaching of evolution in science courses. Parents have been unable to ignore the decisions of the schools in any of these areas. The author concludes that the major force which will shape the United States in the year 2000 is a revolution in ability to control physical and social organizations. References are included. (Author/DB)

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NO EXIT: THE CLOSING OF CHOICE IN EDUCATION

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No Exit: The Closing of Choice in Education

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What will be the consequence in the year 2000 of the policies we are pursuing in education today? More specifically, what will be the political consequences of policies shaping elementary and secondary education?[1]

While I am concerned about public policies in education as shapers of these future effects, I am not focusing on any specific policy. Rather I am concerned with the aggregate effects of a broad range of policies by which we guide education. Those skilled at policy formulation are entering a difficult time, one in which the social context of public policies will have changed so greatly that policies which in the past advanced us toward one goal will in the future take us further from it. This is particularly difficult for policy analysts to deal with, because these analysts virtually always assume that a society has a certain given character that becomes the raw material of the public policy by which the governmental regime seeks to work its changes-- or to keep things as they are. Once in our past we experienced the kind of change we are facing today: after the Civil War, what might be called the "capital revolution" so transformed

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[1]Although my topic might seem to fall within the area of political socialization, I am taking quite a different approach from what has become the traditional approach of studying the political consequences of schools. Political sociology applied to education has typically studied student political concepts and positions, and the means of their formation. But if we carefully review the political effects of schools, we see that

the private sector that private forces became more powerful and onerous than any government of the United States had ever been. Prior to that time, American freedoms had been protected by controlling the force which had most greatly threatened them, the government itself. After the turn of the century, policies which relied upon the private sector to protect individual freedoms no longer were appropriate and reformers were forced to support, grudgingly at first and then more fully, the regulation of the private sector by government.

The major force which will shape us in the year 2000 is not any particular public policy but rather a revolution in our ability to control physical and social organizations. The introduction of cybernetic technology, that is the introduction of data acquisition and management systems which will give us a systems-management capability of substantial complexity and

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schools have direct political effects on individuals, and indirect political effects on societies, and that in either case these effects may be immediately manifest, or may not be fully visible until some time in the future.

Table I

A Categorization of Elementary and Secondary School Political Effects (with examples of each type of effect)

	Immediacy of Consequence: IMMEDIATE	Immediacy of Consequence: FUTURE
Directly affects individuals (students, teachers)	1. Busing/Integration 2. Students' rights Court decisions	1. Civic education 2. Formation of political attitudes toward presidency, Court, etc.
Indirectly affects social units (communities, families, nation)	1. Effect of the quality of the school on the sifting (segregation) of the population of the city or SMSA	1. Effect of school on rise of class and mass-based politics, the topic of this paper

power, will transform American political life. I will attempt to illustrate this transformation in those two social policy areas which I believe to be of most importance to most Americans: housing and education.

The significance of the change is well illustrated in an analogy. In 1961, a classic "Western" film, Akiru Kurosawa's Yojimbo, told the story of the decline of the Japanese Samurai class in the 1860s as the result of the introduction of the revolver. The revolver was held by a tall, thin, young, flashy samurai hoodlum, who clearly would have lost an arm if he ever had to draw a sword. In the end he is defeated by the cunning old master samurai but by then it is obvious the time of the samurai, and the political system of contending war-lords they supported, is at an end. The gun democratized warfare by humbling the special skills and force of the elite samurai class. Power became accessible to any who could hire a gun, and the war-lords lost their monopoly over force and violence. The gun did

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Traditional studies in political socialization, such as the excellent work of Hess and Torney (1), have concentrated on direct immediate effects of schools upon individuals, or upon direct individual future effects, as in the work of Easton and Dennis (2). Direct effects are the consequences of the program or the culture of the individual schools upon the students (or teachers or other) whose experiences the school intentionally structures through its curriculum. (I would include in this category the lessons schools teach through what has been called the "hidden agenda.")

Schools' indirect effects are those consequences for society arising from responses the schools, as institutions, evoke from the citizenry. For example, schools present an overall character to parents in a community

not provide the motivation for the transformation of the political structure-- commercial trade with the West did that-- but it brought the transformation about.

The communications and data-control systems introduced in the middle part of this century will have an effect more powerful than the gun, but the effect will be quite different. While the gun tended to democratize, the electronic and cybernetic technology will tend to consolidate and concentrate power. In this paper I will explore some ideas about what those effects will be, and why they will occur. Initially the different sections may seem to be unrelated, but I hope by the end my argument will demonstrate that they belong together.

What are the major political effects of cybernetic and associated communications technology? There are at least three: (1) the concentration of power to control; (2) a change in the characteristic types of politics and policies at the national government level; and (3) the gradual elimination of free choice for classes of population in areas of our social life that touch everyone. Of them all, the last, the reduction of the numbers who make

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in that they offer a particular program, have their individual reputations for their quality, and quite often have reputations for hospitality to one or another racial, ethnic or economic group. People choose among schools on these bases, and the result of their choice within urban school systems, and among the urban and suburban systems serving a metropolitan area is a sifting of the urban population into relatively homogeneous enclaves. (Thomas Crocker, an environmental economist, has identified the quality of the neighborhood school which serves the home, as a consistent factor explaining variation in the valuation of a home, or in rent. (3) Thus the schools indirectly shape the community by offering it choices which help produce very clear patterns of economic, ethnic and racial siftings of our population in the urban areas. This indirect social effect of the schools is an immediate effect, so immediate that even subtle changes in school character will produce in remarkably short periods of time, substantial changes in the characteristics of the distribution of urban populations. I am concerned in this paper with future indirect effects of schools.

autonomous choices, is the most important change, as the examples of housing and education will show. The elimination of choice in these areas will, I argue, bring about substantial disaffection with fundamental liberal democratic principles, and threatens to encourage mass political movements. I think, however, choice is the most difficult to discuss, and following a long tradition in our profession, I will hold the difficult to the end.

"Cybernetic technology" includes computers and all their associated hardware and paraphernalia, including the development of usable social indicators, monitoring systems, and advanced communications technology. These give man the ability to acquire and manage instantaneously huge quantities of data, a control capacity so great it must be regarded as a difference in kind, not merely in degree from previous human capabilities. The new ability permits previously impracticable degrees of centralization of control of complex social operations, and has transformed both the industrial community and the government in the short time since its introduction. The simplest examples suggest the power of this change. In the private sector, sophisticated communications technology has made possible the growth of the multi-national conglomerate. In the public sector, we need only contemplate the president's ability to act as a virtual battlefield commander in portions of the Vietnamese War, a battlefield commander half the world away from the action.

The information processing systems are only useful if one has the ability to act on the information; and the potential for effective control by using the information has given great support to the centralization of authority in the social, industrial and political spheres.

In the private economic sector, the evidence of increasing concentration of power is too well known to be worth repeating here. At a relatively primitive stage of its development, control technologies made possible the construction of what remains the classic physical example of immense private power, the United States Steel Company's Gary works. Anyone who has travelled past the plant at street level cannot have failed to be impressed by its gigantic size, and the effect it has of changing the scale of the earth, and turning the color and texture of the sky and air thick and orange-hued. But U.S. Steel represents a primitive form of the concentration of power possible today. It is so parochial in its reach, compared to the modern multinational corporations. Howard Perlmutter of The Wharton School estimates that by 1985, the 300 largest multinationals will produce more than one-half of all the goods and services in the world. (4)

The public sector has centralized as well, partially from the need described by McConnell (5) for a countervailing force to keep private power within rein. Congress acts much more frequently on legislation which directly and broadly affects individuals than it did fifty years ago. We can see the changes in virtually every field that Congress touches: health, education, welfare, housing, the business economy, in communications and travel, and in many other areas. Only recently has the president been viewed as the most proper and capable maker of policies, and a mark of his growing power is the more frequent use of the generic term "the presidency" to designate the scores of people who are appointed at his pleasure and act by his authority. Among the most important justifications of the president's exercising such authority are his ability to respond swiftly to rapidly changing events in time of crisis and his position as the focal point of all

the civilian and military intelligence agencies and strategic and policy planning councils. The great rapidity of the events today, his knowledge of their changing conditions, and his ability to respond to them are all products of technological change.

Nowhere in the government has the concentration of authority been more pronounced than in the Court's interpretations of our laws, by means of which the Court has created a number of national standards to be applied to all state and much individual action. Perhaps even more national standards have been established by Congressional laws and Agency regulations. Increasingly, the nation has been made to accept and enforce the same rules governing such locally controversial matters as race relations, the conduct of local schools regarding prayers, curriculum, student relationship to the schools' disciplinary authority, other student rights, and public finance. The nation as a whole obeys the same rules regarding the regulation of air pollution, water pollution, solid waste disposal, health and industrial safety, sex or race discrimination in employment, agriculture production, food and drug quality, and social services for the poor, the aged and children. The nation is also subject to national regulations of banking and finance, money market manipulation, and taxation policy which shapes its local economic activity. Each state and local community has been encouraged to identify the same local educational problems as requiring more attention, and to invest heavily in limited access highways and mental health centers. Even our legal procedures have been standardized among states regarding the need for counsel, rules of evidence, characteristics of the jury system. And the Court has interposed the Federal Constitution to prohibit state enactments

(and thus standardize the practice) in such widely diverse areas as policies governing marriage, sex offenses, pornography, criminal procedures and punishments, abortion and so on. Most of these areas have traditionally been within State, not Federal, jurisdiction.

Many of the changes I have listed have been great advances for equality and fairness in the United States; many of them were necessary to combat specific evils that arose as a consequence of the more intricate social integration that we have recently experienced; many were designed to foster precisely that greater integration. But whatever the immediate reasons for their being, they have caused a cumulative standardization of American life.

I. Centralization

As I have said, technology fosters a gradual centralization of power in both the private and public spheres, and it causes a substantial change in national policies and the national politics which support them. The changes in approach to policy at the national level have come both as a direct and indirect response to technology: direct in that technology carries a promise that it is possible to control far more dispersed and entwined social problems than previously seemed possible, and promises a degree of efficiency in approaching similar problems in a large number of areas-- even everywhere-- simultaneously; indirect in that the great concentrations of power, effort and activity cybernetic technology permits have substantial effects on the social and environmental systems which sustain us.

The environmental effects the centralization and concentration of economic activity cybernetic technology has made possible are massive. Our economic system has not assigned responsibility for them to their producers. So there is no enforced private sector regulation of the effects; and so the control over them must be centralized in the public sector and

in most cases in the federal government, the only government whose jurisdiction is large enough to contain them. Consider the Gary steel mills once again. They have changed the shore line and the current flows in Lake Michigan, have greatly altered the fish stock of the lake through their need for a direct sea linkage to by-pass Niagara Falls and, if we count the Mesaibi Range in the complex, have poisoned much of the waters of Lake Superior with asbestos. They daily load the air of at least three states, Michigan, Illinois and Indiana, with pollutants so concentrated that the Indiana Tollway has been forced to close stretches at times because the smoke was too thick for cars to proceed, and so poisonous that the first portion of rains on the South Side of Chicago contains sulphuric acis. The plants have poisoned the creeks and marshlands of the area, once a breeding ground for wildlife, with concentrated amounts of arsenic and petrochemicals that are by-products of the smelting process, and so have greatly affected the area's wildlife and eco-systems. And as Crenson has shown, the Gary city council lacks the power and the inclination to force the company to accept responsibility for its actions. (6) The company, for its part, can at its will, threaten the livelihood of most residents of Gary, which remains today the best example in America of the classic industrial company town.

This latter is an example of another type of environmental effect of the great concentrations of power through the technology: we are now at the stage where virtually our entire population has been integrated into the industrial system. For most of us, our subsistence depends on the decisions made by a few managers of key, large industries. Important social consequences directly and indirectly flow from what were formerly private business investment decisions. Because these decisions in the private sector are made at the national level (in fact they could be made be some Italian or German or Arabic businessman as well), they and the

effects they have can only be regulated by a national government. Numerous political scientists have gone further and argued that these can only be controlled by the most unitary power of the central government, the office of the presidency. (7)

II. New Types of National Policies and Politics

There are two consequences of this centralizing of policy that are related to each other as will become clear by the end of my discussion. First, the new federal policies will have quite different characteristics from the old. And second, they will produce a crisis in discretionary income for a significant proportion of our population, and this crisis will risk serious political consequences.

I will not spend much time arguing that federal policies will change their character in response to the centralization of power in the private sector, because I and others have argued that elsewhere. Neustadt believed that a popularly elected president would have to assume new powers to overcome the problems of private power; he argued that substantially more rationally articulated and coercive policies were needed, and that the politics surrounding a presidency wielding these would also change. The policies would be comprehensive in their scope as a result of executive planning, and not be simply the resultant of political compromises wrought out among interested groups or states. And it would be executed by the unitary executive rather than by a hodgepodge of local authorities at their discretion. And the new politics which supported these new presidential powers must be a kind which gives a mandate directly to the president: the president would be freed of his obligation to the local party machines in cities and states around the country, and would have such mass support that strong interest groups would be submerged in the flood.(8) McConnel makes

a similar but more explicit argument than Neustadt.(9) He claims that a careful look at Congressional behavior shows that substantial changes in policies have already begun to take place. For example, where once Congress in considering the tariff listened to the desires of literally hundreds of individuals, companies, industries, local communities for special tariff protections, today tariffs are formulated within the executive, and considered for their effect on overall American economic interests, military and diplomatic needs, and its interest in an international economic community whose health ultimately is of importance to the American economy. An individual company's desire for protection is virtually an insignificant voice in the face of the much larger issues presented,and the kinds of interest groups and ideological groups which choose to express themselves and attempt to build support for the policy, or their versions of the tariff policy, today are quite different from those taking place as recently as the 1930s, when Schattschneider made his Tariff Act study.(10) In sum the new policy is a calculated device to affect broad policy goals, and not an ad hoc collection of particularistic benefits adopted without reflection upon their spillover or aggregate effects. And the political process itself changes from very low conflict, low demand pork barrel politics to a much higher conflict, even ideological clash in which whole economic or ideological sectors expect to defeat their opponents.(11) In the latter case, the winners understand quite clearly they are imposing costs on the losers, and this knowledge, combined with the much more active role of the federal government, marks a transformation in both the policy and its politics. I have elsewhere argued that the politics must change in order to have sufficient support to effect the overthrow of the old policy, its bureaucracy and the interest groups which support it.(12)

In sum, I believe the kinds of policies taking place at the central government level will continue in the direction of their current changes.

Disaggregated policies, local pork barrel policies, even regional policies and revenue sharing type federalistic policies (in which federal support is given to local authorities to use at their discretion) will continue to decline, to the point of extinction. The federal government will act more directly, according to its own standards, because that is what is required by the effects of the technological change on our society. And the rate of the technological transformation can only be expected to increase in the forseeable future.

III. The Ending of Choice

I believe this change in policies is much more than a mere shift of governmental authority from the local level and the states to the federal government, although it does include that shift. But it also represents a direct increase in governmental power compared to the private sector. However, I do not wish to be misunderstood on this point. I am not arguing that the increase in public power comes at cost to the wielders of the enormously centralized private power in society, for these managers of conglomerates have assembled their power much more rapidly than the government has mobilized to hold them in check. Rather both public and private sectors have gained power at the cost of the individual citizen. Governmental regulation, or direct governmental standard-setting, benefits the individual compared to what he would suffer at the hands of the private sector economic tyrants without it, but the regulation does not return to him the state of independence he once enjoyed.

This great increase in public power will begin to circumscribe

more narrowly the area of private decisions and choice. This more regulated life will be perceived as diminishing freedom, but because the loss will be limited since some choices will remain, and because it will be more or less equally suffered, it is more likely to produce powerful political reaction. Only such mythical figures as the cowboy in Lonely Are the Brave would suffer its loss greatly. That is, only a figure who rejects the ease, the pleasure and the achievements that have come, only a pre-social man, would wish the changes could be undone.

But the integration of society that technology fosters, combined with the great increase in the level of governmental activity and services which will result from it, will together produce a cycle of pressures on discretionary income that will have political consequences. I believe the increase in integration of society will increase the lowest amount of money families must have to survive in the society.* Theoretically, the argument is that the more integrated the society (and I am, of course, not referring to racial integration here) the more the members depend on one another. A good example of a highly integrated community is a tribal community, a group not noted for rugged individualists. Technology has created a community at least as interdependent as the tribal community, but depersonalized. Instead of clan ties, status and tradition, money is the medium of expression of the interdependence. Examples of this are numerous. When no one had an automobile, it was possible to live quite decently without one. In cities, services were delivered to the home or were within walking distance. In rural areas, many little farm centers and crossroads stores eliminated long journeys for necessities. But the car has changed all this. Industrial plants are now situated on the fringe of the community, beyond the reach of efficient mass

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* By "integration" I mean total social and economic integration, and not simply racial integration, although that is included.

transportation, and a car is necessary to reach them. Because travel by car is so prevalent, entire communities with no commercial areas have developed. Commercial areas have been clustered in shopping centers removed from residential areas, surrounded by acres of parking lots, and protected by barriers of highways from pedestrian traffic. In most areas of the country, a car is a necessity. A similar case could be made for the telephone and perhaps for the television set which, unfortunate as it may be, is now the major vehicle for news and political discussion, or rather dissemination.

Basic living costs will rise, the federal government will need greater amounts of income to cover the costs of its increased activities and services, and its tax demand will remove greater proportions of the individual citizen's discretionary income. The individual needs money to exercise most choices in society, and both the costs of the high level of technology and the level of taxation will put pressures on his holding discretionary income.

Because the basic minimum amounts of money needed to survive and participate as a dignified citizen within the community will not be available to increasingly large numbers of people, the government has and will provide the financing of essential services and even necessities of life to an increasing proportion of our population. But in doing this the government must tax more to pay for its efforts (or tax indirectly by printing money or borrowing it), and in so doing will remove even greater amounts of discretionary income from individuals, and shove even more individuals over the line beyond which they need direct government subsidy.

The higher levels of taxation will also contribute to raising further the basic cost of living, since the tax will form a kind of overhead which must be figured into the labor costs of labor intensive goods and services normally purchased through discretionary income.

The changes I am describing do not necessarily mean a decline in the quality of life, for the government is increasing its provision of services in most of the areas in which individuals are being priced out of the market, and this pattern will continue. Rather it means that allocative choices will be made by the public body rather than by individuals; individuals will make fewer choices. The obverse of the loss of choice by individuals is the increase in governmental power to form society, a not unimportant gain, but not an unmixed blessing.

The loss of discretionary income will affect classes differently. I will discuss two areas which seem to me to be particularly politically sensitive, because they have traditionally been considered the private preserve of the individual: the home, and the raising of children. The Bill of Rights indicates the traditional importance attached to individual liberties and the home. In the First Amendment an area of private life is defined, an area of life in which governmental power is explicitly held to be inferior to individual wills. The Second and Third Amendments extend a degree of that protection of the private life of the individual to the home, explicitly protecting the home from arbitrary invasions by the government.

While the right of parents to raise their children is not explicitly

discussed in the Constitution, it was unquestionably assumed by the founders, and is protected under common law.

The Choice of Housing

Already the squeeze on incomes has substantially limited choices in the area of housing and education. Today when median income for a family of four is $13,100 (September, 1975) the median cost of a standard tract home is $43,000 (July, 1976). The standard banker's rule-of-thumb has been that a family can afford a mortgage equal to 1.5 times its annual income, or about $20,000 for the median family income. The average American family can not afford a new tract home: less than 40% of American families can afford the median priced home. Relief will not be found in the public sector either. New York State, the leader in publicly subsidized housing, has found that it cannot supply housing to middle-income families through a non-profit state agency, despite heavy public subsidy, at an affordable cost that is a cost affordable simultaneously to itself and to the tenant. What will inevitably result is the expansion of the public housing system in which families are assigned housing according to state-defined standards of need, in locations which foster state-determined social policies. Once again, the argument is not that the quality of living will decline: it is likely that it will not. Nor that the policies will be disastrous for public objectives: it is likely the policies could bring about greater concentrations of population, restore whites to the central cities, bring about efficiency in transportation, ease the planning and delivery of social services, and foster racial integration. Rather it

is that the political consequences of the loss of choice by only a portion of the population are significant. For note: we are saying that the state will obtain authority over individuals that it does not now have; that is why its power will be increased. But it will obtain this authority only over those who do no have sufficient income to permit them a choice of housing. There will be an increasing class distinction in the exercise of fundamental rights.

The Choice of Education

In education, matters are even more serious, for today choices are greatly constrained, and changes are taking place within the kinds of schools available which will in a short while make choices more difficult. When we think of choices in education, we tend to think first of private schools. Private schools require, for the most part, tuition for their support. If a family cannot afford the tuition, and cannot support the school by its direct labor, it does not have the option of private schools. Thus, it should come as no surprise that the poorer a person is, the less likely he is to attend private school. For example, only 4.4% of the population of Columbus, Ohio - a typical American town - who live in census tracts with median incomes under $7,000 were in private schools, compared to 5.6% for the next group of tracts up to $8,499 income, and 9.5% for the next up to $9,700 median income. For Columbus, and for the general U.S. population, income groups above $8,500 are present in private schools in approximately the same proportion as they are present in the population.(13) It is not that private schools are elitist; rather it is that the poor simply cannot

choose them. There is very good reason to think the poor would choose them if they could: A study by Hancock at the University of Chicago demonstrates that children from the lowest income groups are more benefited by private schools over public schools than any other income group.(14)Further, there is reason to believe that the lowest income groups in the population are more religiously traditional and even fundamentalist and would be more likely to want religious education than the upper-income groups. Virtually 90% of all private schools are at least formally religious and one would expect therefore to find a greater proportion of poorer children in private schools than the upper-middle class. But that is not the case. There is, of course, an irony here which we must discuss after discussing choice in public education: there is reason to believe that because they cannot afford it, the poor are being deprived of the choice of religious education even when that choice is important to the exercise of their religion.

For those people whose incomes are totally derived from public assistance one might ask how they can support their religious belief, for are they not priced out of freedom of religion? Or may they only belong to sects the wealthy are willing to subsidize? It is my argument that by the year 2000 a much greater proportion of the population will be in precisely this condition.

Let's put aside the religious school question for the moment and look at other private schools. For example, in New York City a private school is no longer a viable choice for a middle-income family of four (unless that family is willing to send its children to less expensive

religious schools). Only families with taxable incomes of $60,000 or more could afford the private schools, not because New York City tuitions are so high (they range from $2200 to $3200 a year) but because private school tuition is taxed, and rents in the city are relatively high: combined they force the family into the highest tax brackets in which approximately 60% of all income goes to federal, state and local taxes. It requires discretionary income of $10,000 a year to pay the tuition of two children to New York City private schools. With the exception of a handful of public schools patronized by middle-class whites in the lower elementary grades, there are virtually no middle-class whites in the central areas of New York City in the public schools. Except for the middle-class families with children in parochial schools, there is no white middle-class family population in the central areas of the city. The white middle class choses to move into the free suburban school system. Public schools, too, are schools of choice.

However, if, as we are predicting, the middle-class parents will no longer be able to choose the location of their home, they will not be able to choose their local public school. Today, only the poorest populations, and those recently under court-ordered or locally determined integration plans, and those living in rural districts, do not exercise this choice in the public schools. To be sure some have greater ability to choose than others for some have more money than others to put into housing. How many Americans wouldn't like to live in Pocantico Hills, New York, where the public school system spends $8600 per child, much more than most private elementary schools spend. So widespread is the practice of

moving to the neighborhood of a school to which you wish to send your child that environmental economists have discovered that local public school quality (relative to others in its system and surrounding area) is a constant factor in determining the market value of a house. As an inducement to the customer to rent or buy a house, real estate advertisements frequently identify the neighborhood school which serves the home's location. The behavior of the housing market demonstrates that public schools are schools of choice and, at the least, exist in a competitive market composed of other public schools within the system or in nearby systems.(15)

So the inability to purchase a home of one's choice becomes an inability to choose the school to which one will send his or her child. Political scientists have not given enough attention to the effect of choice on satisfaction in education. I believe, from my studies of private schools, that it has a very great effect.(16) The degree of satisfaction that the public has with its public schools can much more readily be explained by the function of choice than by the more or less effective operation of local school boards. It is frequently in districts where the local boards receive no attention that support for and satisfaction with the schools is greatest. But things will change dramatically when people can no longer choose their school. For the services which were once obtained by their own choice, and were therefore in a shape they were willing to accept, now will be provided by state choice and in a shape that the state determines. This is an important change, even if there is no immediate or discernible

difference in the services provided, even if, for example, the schools to which the children are sent are in exactly the same condition, with the same programs and teachers as the schools the parents would have chosen when they could afford to chose. For choosing, itself, had an effect on parents. There was no golden time when parents could always have all the things they wanted. Rather they faced concrete alternatives which involved what things they could afford, and what plans they could complete, and what they would have to sacrifice for the sake of something else. They wanted more. Their choice made them feel responsible for their decisions even when their alternatives were constrained. But without a choice, they would make no such decisions about what was more important or less important. Rather they would lose responsibility for that phase of their lives, and feel the loss of freedom. They would believe the education given their children was inferior to what they had wanted, because they would never have had to moderate their demands.

These changes are politically important for at least two reasons. The first is akin to Turner's thesis on the closing of the frontier and its effect on American life: Turner argued that problems that previously could be avoided because the most discontented could move West to seek their fortune in that unformed society had to be faced for the first time when individuals no longer had the choice to move West.(17) The open frontier made a difference even to those who had opted to remain in the Eastern cities, for even they knew they could leave if things got too bad. They stayed voluntarily. But when the possibility of bettering oneself by moving West ended, individuals no longer saw that they were responsible for the distasteful life they believed they were forced to lead. They had no choice. It was forced upon them. Thus began a period of political unrest. A similar problem

will occur in education. People have previously solved many of their concerns with schools by choice, and our schools have tended to become relatively homogeneous because of these choices, including religious, racial, class or ethnic criteria. Once their choice is removed, they will fight out their demands in the schools, and the schools will become much more politicized. I believe, in fact, the fights will cause a grave Constitutional crisis, because of the way in which the Courts have interpreted the First Amendment.

Consider that schools touch directly on the basic freedoms of speech, press, and belief, and that children are compelled to spend from 10-12 years in school under threat of criminal penalties. Unless a family has sufficient money to permit its children to avoid a state school, if they choose, they must attend a school operated by the state, must read books screened by the state and selected for the publicly-determined educational values. Such a system appears to come dangerously close to depriving every citizen of each of the first three freedoms of the Bill of Rights. But evidently Americans have not felt that loss. That is because through the operation of choice, the greatest conflicts were avoided. Those Americans who do raise precisely these issues and speak of a loss of freedom in these terms are, according to my studies, inner-city poor blacks, rebellious whites labelled as juvenile delinquents for not attending schools, and whites whose children were being bused against their will for the purpose of integration. The loss of choice in education will threaten the belief that our governmental system provides us with fundamentally guaranteed freedoms.

And that leads to the last and most important political consequence: The loss of choice will threaten support for the regime, first because choice plays an elemental role in the definition of First Amendment freedoms, and second because the loss of choice will follow a class-based pattern, and American will for the first time have a class-based politics.

Choice and the First Amendment

Of all the American freedoms, those of the First Amendment are the most central, the paramount political and individual freedoms. An important aspect of the Amendment is that it does not strictly speaking create freedoms; it prohibits the government from infringing upon freedoms which already exist. The Amendment is essentially a limit on government. It prohibits Congress from making laws concerning the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise of religion, or abridging the freedom of speech, press, or the right to assemble peaceably and to petition the government for redress of greivances. In considering the way in which the First Amendment protects our freedoms we will be introduced to one portion of the political changes I believe will occur by the great restrictions on choice that will occur.

The First Amendment does not create freedoms. It presupposes a variety of opinions in the society, and a variety of institutions to express those opinions, and it seeks to protect that variety from governmental restriction. There are, of course, numerous debates about the precise meaning of the Amendment. One of the most interesting and literal interpretations has recently been argued by George Anastaplo,

constitutional lawyer and political scientist.(18) Anastaplo points out that modern commentators frequently forget that the Amendment specifically applied to Congress and not to the states, and that the framers had two intents with the Amendment: 1) to set the standards which would limit the possibility of Congress establishing itself as a tyranny, and 2) to ensure there would be no uniform law in the area by Federal imposition. At the time of the Amendment, several of the states had at least partially established churches, and most regulated one or another of the basic freedoms of speech and press. The framers did not believe the Amendment settled the basic difficulties involved with freedom of speech and press or the problem of religion and the state, but they did believe that it had achieved a federal solution, which was to rely on the diversity of state legislation in this area.

A more commonly noted aspect of the Amendment's reliance on diversity in the society was recognized by Chief Justice Holmes, who even while dealing the Amendment its most serious blow by overriding the principle of diversity in the states, by announcing a federal standard on free speech and by providing the first federal limitations on political speech in his "clear and present danger" test, simultaneously gave homage to the principle of diversity at the Amendment's core which he vulgarized as "the market place of ideas."

Virtually all interpreters of the amendment agree that its most central contribution to freedom rests in its proscribing the federal government from expounding official doctrine in any legally compelling fashion. Religions establish the truth according to revelation, but Congress could not legislatively recognize the preference of one religious

truth over another. Similarly, individuals could not be prevented from speaking their beliefs freely, or printing and distributing them.

But note that the Amendment is entirely a negative one. It does not compel the Congress to do anything about freedom. Rather, it holds that freedom is best protected if Congress cannot act in certain ways. This deserves closer attention. There is freedom of religion if there is no established religion. But what if there were only one religion, and what if that religion controled all economic life? Would there still be freedom of religion? Is there freedom of religion in a monastery, or in a totally Mormon (Utah) community, or in Old Order Mennonite communities in Pennsylvania? Yes, of course there is, but we would not be sure of its presence if we only considered the communities themselves as complete and isolated entities. For there is no religious choice within these communities, and even without establishment the church has greater power in determining the social order through the voluntary adherence of its members than does the state itself, even though the state has the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. But individuals cannot ultimately be compelled into the religious order of those communities because they are free to leave, and there are places to go where their divergent views will be supported.

Freedom of speech is closely related to freedom of religion, for the protected speech is speech about political, philosophical and religious beliefs. Even if Congress did not infringe freedom of speech, if men spoke publicly only of trivia, say of plants or of restaurants, and never of their judgments of what is true or good in their political life or any other aspect of their life which was important to them, we

would not say they were a people who exercised freedom of speech.* In a sense of course they would have free speech: they could say whatever they wished without fear of reprisal, and they could hear whatever was being said without fear, but if men choose not to speak in public about the most important things, so that there is nothing above the trivial to hear, then the freedom which the amendment seeks to preserve is lost.

The case is even simpler with the press. We are guaranteed the right to print and distribute political discourse. The right is an extension of the right of free speech-- a type of freedom of communication. But what if there is only one newspaper and no technical means of economically creating another? What if the population is spread out to such an extent that only a small portion of it can be informed by leafletting? What if the major form of political communication is no longer the written word, but because of the size and dispersion of the political audience, visual representations-- television and perhaps radio? And what if there is only one station? Can we be said to enjoy the freedom of press that the Amendment sought to preserve?

In each of these three examples, the basic political freedom the Amendment sought to preserve rested in the community, and existed when there was diversity in the community and choice for its residents, as existed at the time the Amendment was written.

The Rise of Mass Society

Class will become important because the income will come to determine who can exercise fundamental liberties now widely enjoyed. And the inability to exercise these liberties implies certain other inabilities as well.

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* I am not here speaking about any exalted philosophical discourse, but simply free speech and the judgment of free men about the things going on about them for which they bear some responsibility.

One of the factors Kornhauser cites as contributing to the rise of mass society is the decline of intermediary institutions, such as the churches. The loss of discretionary income will bring about just such a decline in America.(19)

Similarly, damage to the family structure and to its place as a fundamental social unit of the community may contribute to the rise of mass society. We should expect that technology will directly damage the family by its propensity to relocate industrial employees and professionals, and thus to disperse the extended and even the nuclear family. Furthermore, the family's loss of choice in the area of education, and the assumption by the state of the provision of necessities, especially food and shelter, once provided by the family, will combine to weaken the importance and influence of the family. I am not saying that mass society will develop, only that I expect the conditions for its appearance to develop. I believe that choice in education will be a central factor encouraging or retarding its appearance, and that we must consider ways of supporting individual choice in the absence of widely distributed discretionary income. Otherwise, the conditions supporting mass society, combined with the radical undermining of the belief in the government's ability to grant the freedoms of the Bill of Rights, threaten the support for the democratic regime.

The mass and ideological politics has occured in education already in a number of issue areas. The politics arises whenever political potent populations are deprived of choices in areas they regard as having fundamental importance to them. The three most significant issue areas in education in which this has occurred in recent times has been in racial integration, in sex education curriculum, and the orthodox teaching

of evolution in science curricula. In each of these areas, ideological issues have arisen when parents found it impossible to avoid the dictation by the school of the experiences to which their children would be subject, when parents disagreed with what the schools proposed. Each area is important because each touches on very personal aspects of responsibility for the child, and belief about moral behavior and the source and ultimate definer of truth.(20) But the most important reason for the rise of the ideological politics today in these areas is that for the first time it is becoming difficult for the parents to avoid the decisions of the schools. What used to be settled at the classroom level with the teacher, or the schoolhouse level with the principal must now be taken to the city board of education, to the state board or even to the legislature.

Thus to return to the theme with which I began this discussion: our social context has so changed that the policies we once pursued to increase our freedom of religion will no longer lead us to that end. Large portions of our population will be deprived of that important political freedom unless we allocate our resources by public policy in such a way as to permit them to continue to make their own choices in education.

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